

Conference Abstract

An Integrative Approach to Rehousing the Herpetology Collection

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Abstract

Museums Victoria stores close to 80,000 herpetological specimens in its wet collection. A large proportion of these specimens were housed in Fowlers Vacola jars, which had degrading rubber seals on them, leading to ethanol loss in many of the jars and potential specimen degradation. Along with this, the collection was also in drastic need of taxonomic updating, new labelling and an inventory of the specimens. I developed a procedure for volunteers to work through to complete all of these steps in the one project. This included replacing jars with new 2 L screw-top jars with plastic seals, topping up ethanol and updating labels where required. Taxonomy was also revised, both on our electronic database and reflected in the physical storage of the specimens in the collection. There are many benefits to this project – staff and visitors can now locate the specimens more easily, taxonomy is more accurate, all specimens have been visually inspected, degradation of specimens has been minimised and we have a new baseline inventory of all specimens. This has already been extremely valuable during a recent large-scale audit of the collection. Our next step will be to barcode all of these specimens, so that effective location control will occur from this point forward.

Keywords

Herpetology, barcoding, rehousing, wet collection, lizard, frog

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